

**Three days after the storm**, Mississippi Power's outside workforce already exceeded the 5,000 planned for in the company's worst-case scenario. Repair crews were arriving in fuel-guzzling heavy equipment — bucket trucks, digger derricks, 18-wheelers pulling bulldozers.

Wilson's job was to feed the men. Rufus Smith's job was to feed their trucks.

On a normal day, Mississippi Power's fleet of 600 trucks consumes 3,000 gallons of fuel. One week after the hurricane, the company was feeding 140,000 gallons a day to a fleet of 5,000 trucks.

"My worst nightmare was to have 5,000 trucks and no fuel," says Mississippi Power Vice President Bobby Kerley, who oversaw the repair effort.

The fear was understandable. The military and law enforcement were short on fuel. Looters were siphoning gas from cars. Mississippi Power's diesel supply got so low that trucks were limited to 20 gallons on the second day after the storm.

With the cash economy in shambles, Mississippi Power reverted to the barter system: electricity for fuel. It restored power to a Chevron refinery in Pascagoula and a pipeline in Collins, Miss., in exchange for a steady supply of fuel. The decision helped Mississippi Power and also boosted the fuel supply for the Gulf Coast and the entire eastern United States.

#### **Lesson 5: Set high goals — Hard work and pride pay off**

**Six days after the storm**, Mississippi Power executives were surprised at how quickly the repairs were going. They realized the original four-week goal was "average performance," not the "superior performance" called for in the mission statement. Storm directors met every day at 6 a.m. and 6 p.m. At the evening meeting on Sept. 5, Topazi asked: How quickly could power be restored? Someone said two weeks, maybe 13 days.

The company president walked to a dry-erase board on the wall and wrote 9-11-05. "Someone in the meeting noted, 'Hey, that's Sept. 11' (the anniversary of the attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon). We decided then, let's take that terrible date and make it mean something positive."

The company issued a press release after the Monday meeting: Every customer who could safely receive power would have it by Sept. 11, that Sunday. The pledge was an educated guess and a bold dare.

Line crews were hanging wire, sticking poles, replacing transformers and fixing substations at a rate company executives had never seen before. "My job is to keep morale high, but these guys didn't need a morale boost," Topazi said.

Added Powell, the storm assessment director: "These guys had more 'want-to' than I've ever seen. They knew Hurricane Katrina was an historic event and took pride in their role."

The crews are often hurricane veterans.

In the first few days, when big convoys of 30 trucks were common, Mississippi Power might have a single employee assigned to the crew of 50 to 100. The company employee — it could be a line man or cross-trained accountant — directed crews around local streets and maintained radio contact.

By entrusting outside repair crews to do their jobs as they saw fit, Mississippi Power was able to deploy a force nine times bigger than the company.

#### **Lesson 6: Measure results**

**Topazi thinks the breakneck pace** of the repair cost a little less than if the company had stuck to its four-week goal. "We accomplished more work on a per-head basis," he says. Only 350 outside workers remain on the job.

The company still has months of work to do. Its power plants aren't all working. Its transmission system needs repair. There are more than 19,000 customers whose buildings were destroyed or too damaged to receive electricity.

On Sept. 8, Topazi showed a reporter around the company's improvised storm center, where the Sept. 11 goal had been established.

"Oops," he said. "You're not supposed to see that." He erased "9-10-05" from the dry-erase board and rewrote "9-11-05."

Mississippi Power was exceeding its revised expectations. Sure enough, Mississippi Power restored power to all its customers a day early — on Saturday, Sept. 10. Just before dark.



# How Southern Co. workers faced a worst-case scenario

After hurricane, they answered the call with diligence, dedication and downright success

**A**t just past 6 o'clock on a Monday morning in late August, when the rest of America was getting ready to go to work, the men and women of Southern Co. were preparing to really go to work.

First, though, the 1,250 employees of subsidiary Mississippi Power had to live through Hurricane Katrina, the northeast eye wall of which was bearing down on Mississippi with a 29-foot storm surge that would level its coast.

They bunkered down long enough to let it pass and then came out to rescue family and neighbors and go to work trying to reconstruct an electricity system from piles of tangled wire and fallen poles.

Rarely do corporate employees get the opportunity to reach out and touch suffering humanity — modern life can't restart until the electricity comes on — and even more rarely do they answer the call with as much diligence, dedication and downright success as Mississippi Power's employees did in conditions that were, at best, extremely difficult and, at worst, quite dangerous.

Southern Co. is an electric utility long on coastline and deep in hurricane experience. Just a year ago, Hurricane Ivan took out 1.6 million Southern Co. customers in four states. And in 1969, Mississippi Power took Camille's best

punch — the Category 5 storm considered the latter-day American hurricane benchmark.

Southern Co. stresses emergency readiness, responding quickly as a cooperative team whenever our customers lose power. So for planning purposes, another Camille was Mississippi Power's "worst-case scenario." But Katrina proved to be worse than Camille, its storm surge six feet higher, redepositing anything in its way.

Damage and outage assessments commenced as soon as Katrina passed. All 195,000 of Mississippi Power's customers were without power. Sixty-five percent of its transmission and distribution system was damaged — 300 transmission towers, 2,400 transformers, 8,900 power poles and almost 2,000 miles of transmission line. Only 3 percent of its 3,000 megawatts of generating capacity was operational. Its second-largest plant was flooded, its headquarters heavily damaged, its Pass Christian office demolished.

Southern Co. and Mississippi Power had positioned 2,400 out-of-state emergency workers on the fringes of the storm. They began arriving as Katrina departed. Alabama Power, another Southern Co. subsidiary, had 800,000 customers without electricity but chose

to handle the repairs itself so that emergency crews from our other companies — Georgia Power, Gulf Power and Savannah Electric — could go to Mississippi. That's teamwork in the face of crisis.

While Mississippi Power's "worst-case" plans had called for 5,000 outside workers, it quickly realized it would need twice that many, potentially creating a logistics nightmare for employees trying to recover from the worst natural disaster in U.S. history.

Rather than holding the work force to a more manageable size and slowing restoration, Mississippi Power decided to take all the crews it could find and figure the rest out on the fly. By the eighth day, nearly 11,000 workers had descended on the Mississippi coast — from 23 states and Canada.

Six full-service, air-conditioned tent cities were erected to house and feed these individuals, who had stopped everything in their lives to help others in need.

In the stark face of tragedy, a work force trained for emergencies turned very resourceful. Given clear assignments and the authority to carry them out, the company's 20 "storm directors" took care of business.

Mississippi Power employees received cooperation and support from Southern Co. whenever they asked. Twice-daily conference calls took place

between our transmission, information technology and supply chain functions to make certain every need was addressed.

IT ensured that facilities supporting SouthernLINC Wireless, Southern Co.'s own wireless communications system, had emergency generators in place. This was critical, since phone lines were down and most cell phone service was out. For some time, SouthernLINC Wireless was the only communications source available between the Mississippi coast and the outside world.

But Mississippi Power employees received more than they asked for. Some 200 employees and volunteers from Southern Co. went to Mississippi to help employees there — 1 out of every 14 had lost their home, 1 of 2 had a flooded or damaged home. The volunteers moved trees off houses and driveways, salvaged personal belongings or did whatever else they could to enable local employees to focus on their disaster assignments and get the lights on more quickly.

Within 12 days, the lights were back on for all 175,000 customers whose homes or businesses were able to receive power. Katrina turned out to be worse than the "worst-case scenario," yet it triggered a can-do spirit, constructing a stage for our employees to act out our "Southern Style" credo.

**Ratcliffe** is chairman, president and CEO of Southern Co.



**VIEWPOINT**  
**David M. Ratcliffe**

# The Clanton Advertiser

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## Maplesville garbage fees to increase in 2006

*By Tiffany Cannon*

MAPLESVILLE - The Maplesville sewer project has been complete now for a month, however, it's still not running thanks to an issue with power and three surge protectors.

"We've heard that it's this and that, and that it's no one's fault why the surge protectors have been failing," Maplesville Mayor W.C. Hayes said. "But we're getting there. We're installing new protectors and hopefully this time it will work."

Once working, the sewer will benefit 56 residents and businesses total.

In other business, the walking trail is laid out and has been cleared. The council also voted to purchase two bridges for the trail.

The SouthernLINC tower that was originally supposed to be completed next month is on its way up.

"I noticed that they were pouring the foundation last week and it has been said that they are supposed to start stacking it Thursday," Hayes said.

Garbage fees in the Town of Maplesville haven't seen an increase in over five years, but with the price of gas on the rise so are the garbage fees.

"The last increase in garbage fees was June 1999," Hayes said. "The fees went from \$10 to \$13 for residential and businesses increased to \$45."

Effective January 2006, garbage pick up will increase to \$15 for residential pick up and \$50 for business pick up.

The Police Department has a new Captain as Greg Walls was promoted from Lieutenant.

### Headley named commission chairman

The Chilton County Commission is under new leadership for the next year.

### Local placed on leave from Montevallo PD

MONTEVALLO - Montevallo chief of police Steve Southerland and



## MOBILE REGISTER

### Can you hear me now?

Wednesday, December 28, 2005

By SALLIE OWEN  
Capital Bureau

The first day or two after Hurricane Katrina plowed through the Gulf Coast in late August, little was heard from Choctaw County, about 90 miles north of Bayou La Batre.

"We were for a couple of days here truly isolated from the outside world," Bill Gibson, Choctaw County Emergency Management Agency director, recalled.

Officials within the county could communicate fairly well with each other, Gibson said. But without service on their traditional phones, cellular phones and some radios, they had trouble contacting state EMA headquarters or even the next county.

Now Gibson is trying to secure a grant to pay for a satellite phone as the ultimate backup communications tool. Such a phone costs \$600, he said, and bare-bones service will run \$600 a year.

"For a rural county, a thousand dollars is a nice piece of change," he said.

Several improvements made in Alabama since 2004's Hurricane Ivan paid off during Katrina. Still, emergency responders around southwest Alabama are now trying to boost their communication abilities with high-tech gadgets, such as satellite phones and specialized trucks that restore communications in disaster zones, as well as replacement antennas.

Federal grants are paying for many of the upgrades, and some will be in place before the next hurricane season begins in June.

Since the 2001 terror attacks, the federal government has poured hundreds of millions of dollars into fixing communication problems. Progress was scarcely evident after Katrina wiped out systems in Mississippi and Louisiana. Some National Guard commanders relayed orders with runners, according to news reports, while boat patrols could not contact rescue helicopters.

Those kinds of problems cropped up even though Katrina had weakened to a Category 4 storm at landfall in Louisiana and to a Category 3 when it came ashore later in Mississippi.

During the hurricane, some Bayou La Batre police officers stayed in contact with recently acquired backup radios. The department's primary radios were out when the record 12- to 13-foot storm surge hit, said Chief John Joyner.

"That saved some lives," Joyner said of the backup equipment.

When 911 operators got a call, they were able to relay information to police on the secondary radios. The chief said he had just gotten five of them, not enough to go around.

In many parts of southwest Alabama, the storm caused only minor damage to public safety radio systems. Area communications experts could not predict which capabilities would survive if Alabama sustained a

direct hit from a Category 5 hurricane.

"The only thing you could do is hope and pray that our community and our region would come out OK," said Eric Linsley, director of public safety communications for Mobile County.

Bayou La Batre and most other municipalities in the county primarily use a county-maintained 800 megahertz radio system. For backup, Joyner got SouthernLINC radios on the advice of Dauphin Island officials, who said that system retained service throughout Ivan.

The Alabama Emergency Management Agency and countless local governments rely on SouthernLINC. Choctaw County uses it too, but the system functioned intermittently after the storm passed.

Most of the damage to SouthernLINC's network was in Mississippi, said Julie Pigott, vice president for marketing and customer support in the company's Atlanta headquarters. By Sept. 1, three days after Katrina moved through, 98 percent of sites were fully operational, she said. By Sept. 6, the network was functioning 100 percent.

The wireless company is a subsidiary of Southern Company, the corporate parent for Alabama Power Co. and four other electric utilities in the Southeast. Pigott said the system was built for maximum reliability so utility crews could communicate, especially after bad weather.

The SouthernLINC network was launched in 1996 for internal and external users, and the service has appealed to government agencies because of its reliability, she said.

The company said service was restored by Aug. 31 in Choctaw County. That county is on the fringe of SouthernLINC's territory, which makes for a weaker signal even in normal circumstances.

Former Cpl. Spencer Collier, who was a spokesman for the Alabama State Troopers, worked in southern Mobile County during and after Katrina.

"During the first 12 to 24 hours, there was communications breakdown," Collier said. Immediately after the hurricane, he said, he relied on a personal cell phone.

Mobile County EMA Director Walt Dickerson said the main communications problems caused by Katrina were in Bayou La Batre and Dauphin Island.

The county system was working again in Bayou La Batre within about eight hours of Katrina's exit, Joyner said. Phone service for essential government functions was restored within days, using equipment borrowed from other counties.

Linsley said volume more than doubled on the widely used county radio system.

After Hurricane Ivan downed cell systems, Baldwin County EMA Director Leigh Anne Ryals issued county mayors SouthernLINC radios so they could stay in touch with the emergency operations center in Robertsdale.

The county EMA also provides 23 SouthernLINC units for volunteer fire departments during hurricane season, she said.

Emergency responders around Alabama received a significant new tool late in the 2005 hurricane season. It is a four-wheel-drive pickup truck sporting a camper shell and a satellite dish on the roof. The \$325,000 trucks are like the Swiss army knives of mobile communications equipment.

The truck's most important feature is an interoperability switch that can link various radios, cell phones and walkie-talkies, according to Andrew Monaghan in the Baldwin County District Attorney's Office.

The switch can "basically meld all of those into one signal," Monaghan said.

Range will vary among different types of radios, and the switch is a significant improvement over mutual aid

frequencies, Monaghan said.

"We really could have used this thing in Katrina, especially in Bayou La Batre," he said.

Using federal grant dollars, Baldwin County District Attorney David Whetstone bought the truck for the Southwest Alabama Integrated Criminal Justice System. The vehicle will be shared by Baldwin, Mobile, Escambia, Conecuh, Washington, Clarke, Monroe and Choctaw counties.

The Alabama Department of Homeland Security also has purchased eight trucks that will be stationed around the state.

The truck would go in after a hurricane has passed, since the antenna cannot be raised until winds have dropped below 40 mph, Monaghan said. The vehicles are also ideal for events involving multiple law enforcement agencies, such as Mardi Gras and the National Shrimp Festival.

Another big change is under way for the city of Mobile, which is joining the county's radio system. Conversion will improve the city's ability to communicate with county personnel and employees of smaller municipalities in the county, said telecommunications manager Ben Durant.

Estimates ranged from 18 months to three years to complete the change, and at that point, it will be renamed the Mobile Metro 800 Megahertz Radio System.

"Our system is pretty much designed to cover the city of Mobile," Durant said. "Whenever an officer or a (hazardous materials) vehicle drives out of the coverage area, their radio no longer works."

In addition to the planned upgrades, several officials across southwest Alabama said a satellite phone is at the top of their wish list.

Signals for the phones are transmitted by satellites circling hundreds of miles above the earth, out of reach of hurricane winds, according to information from the Consumer Electronics Association, a trade group.

Satellite calls can be placed or received virtually anywhere on earth, but the phone must be outside with an unobstructed "view" of the sky. Some phones can switch between cellular and satellite modes.

"When all else fails, a satellite phone would be the thing to have in your hand," said Ken Eslava, Daphne's director of public works and emergency management coordinator.

State EMA has about 20 satellite phones, and several counties have acquired them, according to State EMA spokesman Scott Adcock.

Dickerson said the Mobile County EMA staff is trying to plan for a Category 5 storm, and the agency is considering getting some satellite phones.

"In this business, you don't just sit on your laurels," he said. "You always have to take lessons learned, and we're continuing to try to get better."

The agency is also looking into buying a portable tower that could fill gaps after a disaster, Linsley said. Telescoping towers mounted on trailers are available up to 100 feet tall, a quarter the height of the county's towers.

Aldrich of the Baldwin County Sheriff's Office said he would like Baldwin to have something like Mobile's county-wide system.

Existing systems make it difficult if, for example, a county highway department truck is delivering barriers to a closed road or sand to a hazardous material spill, he said. If that driver needs directions, the driver radios his dispatcher, who talks to a sheriff's office dispatcher, who talks to a deputy on site.

Creating that kind of system would probably cost \$15 million to \$25 million, Aldrich said. Grants often require matching funds, he said.

Even the widely used mutual aid channels are not fully satisfactory, according to Collier of the State Troopers. After Katrina, those frequencies were quickly overwhelmed in parts of Louisiana and Mississippi.

"The public thinks I can switch over and talk to Mobile PD, but that's not true," Collier said, noting that state officials are trying to improve interoperability. "We need a system where we can directly communicate. Right now, we don't have it."

Weather experts said Katrina was a record storm in a record season -- the most named storms, most hurricanes and most Category 5 storms, those with sustained winds 156 mph or greater. Damage from Katrina totaled at least \$80 billion, making it the costliest U.S. hurricane. The storm's 1,300 fatalities made it the deadliest to hit the country since 1928

It set storm surge records in Alabama too, and the state only got a glancing blow. The eastern eye wall, a hurricane's most intense area, stayed about 75 miles west of Mobile.

If a Category 5 hurricane hit Alabama directly, what would be left in terms of communications systems?

"That's a lot of speculation -- where it hits, the winds, the storm surge, everything," answered Aldrich of the Baldwin sheriff's office. Still, he predicted, no towers and no antennas would survive.

Eslava of Daphne said, "We would have been in the same boat if Katrina had come in here like it did there."

Mobile County's radio towers, with diesel generators and backup fuel tanks, are rated for winds up to 150 mph, the industry maximum, Linsley said.

A Category 4 or 5 storm "is going to pick up a roof, chunk it at your tower and knock down a guy wire," Linsley said.

In disasters, many emergency managers still use amateur, or "ham," radio, a century-old technology that has grown more sophisticated, though some operators still use Morse code.

The Federal Communications Commission licenses ham operators to use certain frequencies, and enthusiasts have a long record of volunteering their particular form of two-way communication during emergencies, according to the American Radio Relay League.

Roy Wulff, deputy EMA director in Baldwin County, said normally two or three ham radio operators report to the Robertsdale emergency operations center for hurricanes, and others work from shelters.

"In the 12 years I've been here," Wulff said, "we've never lost communication ever with a shelter through the ham radio operators."

Operators will sometimes set up nets, Wulff said. One operator might ask another, "Do you have contact with Pascagoula? I'm looking for my brother."

"It sounds primitive, but it is more reliable," Wulff said.

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**Breaking News**

**SouthernLinc to offer priority access to emergency personnel**

By Jeffrey Silva  
Jan 3, 2006

ATLANTA-SouthernLinc Wireless said it is providing wireless priority service, a key post-9/11 telecom offering available to officials in federal, state and local governments and to critical industry executives.

"The ability to communicate quickly and efficiently is critical to certain professions," said Bob Dawson, president and chief executive officer of SouthernLinc Wireless.

continued below

Wireless priority service, which queues up WPS calls ahead of others in times of emergency without disrupting service to the general public, is already provided by major wireless carriers over GSM and iDEN wireless networks.

Verizon Wireless and Sprint Nextel Corp. do not offer WPS over their wireless networks, but are expected to begin doing so in the next year or so.

The pecking order for WPS calls is: executive leadership and policy makers first, followed by disaster response/military command control; public health, safety and law enforcement command; public service/utilities and public welfare; and disaster recovery.

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WebClips

## Clanton (AL) Advertiser

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Headline: SouthernLINC up and running in Maplesville

Source Web Page: <http://www.clantonadvertiser.com/articles/2006/01/09/news/c-news.txt>  
By Tiffany Cannon

Monday, January 9, 2006

MAPLESVILLE - If you've traveled through the Town of Maplesville and decided to make a phone call via SouthernLINC, you probably had good signal.

"The SouthernLINC tower is up and running," Mayor W.C. Hayes said. "We've had a few complaints about the light on top, but that's just part of it. Just be thankful that it works and if you need to use your cell phone, you can now."

In other business, bridges should arrive in town today to complete the walking trail.. Sixty crossties are also needed to complete the bridges over the branches, which are a part of the trail. Mayor Hayes looks for the project to be complete by early spring or the beginning of May.

The council voted to give those who work in the town a 3-percent pay increase with a few minor adjustments last night.

Henry Green was terminated from his duties on the garbage truck due to not being able to perform his job.

"He's not here to perform his job, therefore he's been terminated from his duties," Hayes said.

The council passed a resolution to charge any court cost fees back to the defendant as necessary and also passed the request for Maplesville Elementary School to have a dance Feb. 11 from 6 p.m. until 10 p.m. The cost will be \$5 and will help with purchasing items for the classroom.

In police business, Maplesville should receive their new police car in March. Police Chief Kevin Davis said that he has performed background checks on 15 applicants for the two vacant full-time police officer positions. Unfortunately, he hasn't been able to find those two candidates.

"We're patiently waiting on two people to fill our police force," he said. "So far what we've found, we don't want here in the Town of Maplesville and we'll continue to wait patiently until we get what we want."

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7258 PQ Staff / David Proctor

## SouthernLinc® Tower goes up in Lineville

Area SouthernLinc® customers are looking forward to even better service with the installation of this new tower in Lineville. The company has also added new towers in Roanoke and Wedowee which is good news for the many citizens who travel back and forth between these cities. Please see inside today's paper and future issues for ads regarding cell and mobile service from local and area SouthernLinc® dealers.

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## New cell towers coming to area

By **David Irvin**  
**Montgomery Advertiser**

March 9, 2006

Cell phone users in the tri-county area, call your friends and family.

Wireless providers announced Wednesday new towers and service enhancements for the area.

As part of a \$145 million project across Alabama and Florida, Cingular Wireless will build a new tower this year on U.S. 331 in Montgomery County and revamp nine other sites throughout the tri-county area.

Those enhancements are expected in the next 60 days. Service should improve near North Court and Columbus streets, Zelda and Perry Hill roads, along U.S. 31 and on Interstate 85 between Montgomery and Tuskegee, Cingular officials said.

Nextel Partners, the company that delivers Nextel service in much of the Southeast, also is working on its local network service.

Brian Key, a spokesman for Nextel Partners, said Montgomery and Elmore counties each will get three new towers this year to complement three installed last year in Autauga County.

Nextel Partners is being acquired by wireless carrier Sprint Nextel. The Federal Communications Commission has yet to rule on the merger, but Key believes the deal will go through by the end of the second quarter of this year.

After the merger is complete, Key said, "none of our existing customers will have to go out and buy new equipment."

SouthernLINC, a wireless carrier that primarily serves the Southeast, set up its 10th tower in Montgomery County on Feb. 17. Company officials weren't available to talk about plans.

The Cingular investment is part of a \$6.5 billion nationwide effort to integrate network assets from its 2004 acquisition of AT&T Wireless. Some of the AT&T towers that are redundant will be abandoned, officials said.

T-Mobile will make capital improvements in the area, company officials said, but they did not detail when they would occur.

"We are constantly looking at areas that are growing, where people live, work and play," said Josh Lonn, T-Mobile's senior development manager for the South.

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# County officials meet with SouthernLinc

Representatives from SouthernLinc Wireless recently met with approximately 50 Barbour County residents regarding cellular service on the south end of the county.

Clio Mayor Jack Pelfrey gave a PowerPoint presentation and proposed that SouthernLinc install cellular service equipment on an existing tower in Clio owned by the Alabama Power Company.

"That Alabama Power site is actually premium for Clio," said Michael Smith, SouthernLinc general manager for government sales.

Pelfrey identified several governmental agencies needing cell service including the state Department of Transportation, the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, the Forestry Commission and Barbour County Commission, District Attorney's Investigators, the Emergency Management Agency, the school system, fire and rescue squads and various water utilities.

"For law enforcement agencies, we need to consolidate communications," Circuit Judge, Burt Smithart said.

Interested business partners Pelfrey identified were Alabama Power Company, Pea River Electric Cooperative, Slawson Manufacturing, Cooperative Propane and Price Bros. Transportation. Kendall Cooper of Cooper Construction also attended the meeting.

In addition, the logging and poultry industries were identified as "ripe and ready" markets for cellular service in southern Barbour County, as well as the elderly population.

"Really, they're thinking in terms of cell service—not SouthernLinc, not any real brand, just service," Pelfrey said. Commuters were also identified as interested parties.

Pelfrey took the new Southern Company slogan "Simply Southern" and made it "Simply Southern Barbour County."

Pelfrey said a survey of a random sample of Clio residents conducted the weekend before the meeting showed most people already have cell phones and of those who don't most would get cell phones if the service were reliable.

A majority of respondents rated the reliability of service as low.

"Whoever gets there first with good service is going to find a ripe and ready market," Pelfrey said. "And we're asking you to invest a lot of your money to enable this service. We understand that. As far as the City of Clio is concerned, if you enable service, we will be one of your first customers," Pelfrey said. "And I think there are so many others."

The SouthernLinc delegation made no promises, admitting that they have not had southern Barbour County on their "radar."

"We don't know people need us until they tell us," Smith said. "You have successfully put Clio on our radar."

Louisville city councilman Ray Weston and the Barbour County Commission staff helped get the large crowd to the meeting. Smith told the group he would make sure the research is done to determine whether the SouthernLinc equipment can be mounted on the existing Alabama Power tower in Clio.

"Expectations for this meeting, I thought, was I was going to come down here and meet 10 or 12 people and we were going to talk about opportunities for SouthernLinc in the Clio area," Smith said.

"Obviously that changed pretty quick."

"I wasn't prepared to go this far today, but with this response, you're now on the radar," Smith told the crowd.

He promised to get back to Pelfrey within 30 days with the results of his research.

Approximately 50 people attended the meeting, including Smithart, District Judge Charlie Hart, Sheriff Marshall Williams, Jr., and Eufula/Barbour County Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Jim Bradley. A large contingent from Alabama Power Company also attended, including county commissioner Frank Straughn and southeast division vice president Mike Saxon.

Barbour County Commission chairman Earl Gilmore and co-chairperson Pat Ivey also attended.



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## A failure to communicate

5/3/2006 6:25:57 AM

Daily Journal

By Johanna Neuman  
Los Angeles Times

WASHINGTON -- As state and local officials in the Gulf Coast scrambled to help panicked residents flee Hurricane Katrina on Aug. 29, mobile communications units developed by the Federal Emergency Management Agency were at Barksdale Air Force Base in Shreveport, La. -- outside the disaster area -- and did not make it to the state's emergency operations center in Baton Rouge until the day after the storm hit.

In addition, according to a bipartisan Senate committee report released Tuesday, most of the U.S. Forest Service's 5,000 radios -- the largest civilian cache of radios in the United States -- remained unused.

In the eight months since Katrina devastated Louisiana and Mississippi, much has been written about how the failure of communications hampered relief and rescue efforts. Several reports, including one by a House select committee that Democratic leaders boycotted and another conducted by the White House, documented a collapse of telephones, computers and radio networks.

The 750-page "Hurricane Katrina: A Nation Still Unprepared," issued by the Senate Homeland

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**Business Journal**



**PHOTO GALLERIES**



Security and Governmental Affairs Committee after 22 hearings over seven months, added gripping details to the familiar narrative. The panel's main recommendations -- which included a call for FEMA to be dismantled and restructured -- were announced last week.

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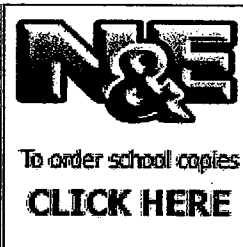
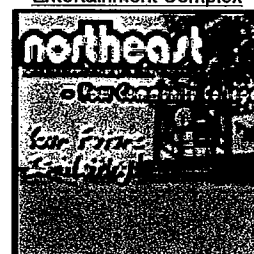
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# THE THOMASVILLE TIMES



## **Relocating evacuees to begin soon**

**By Kathryn F. Pickard**

**Contributing Writer**

**January 26, 2006**

The residents of Thomasville's Hope Village, a shelter for Hurricane Katrina evacuees, have been assured that FEMA and the county will help them find new homes.

Emergency Management Agency Director Roy Waite reported Tuesday that a meeting between local and FEMA officials and a representative from Hope Village shelter had been conducted. Residents of the shelter, which is at the former Thomasville Mental Health Center, have been reassured that FEMA's goal is to help them relocate, either back to the area they left because of Hurricane Katrina, or to a new location.

"They understand that they have to be out of the shelter by April 1 and that we are here to help that transition go as smoothly as possible," Waite said. A mobile outreach unit will be at the shelter site next week.

The former mental health and rehabilitation center, which is owned by the state, is scheduled to become a Life Tech center for parolees.

Residents living in the homes there have until April to leave.

## **Other EMA business**

Waite asked commissioners to check in their districts to see if there were any neighborhoods or communities with only one way to get to the area. He explained that if there was an accident involving a chemical spill or other hazards at the entrance, they would need to have a plan to evacuate anyone in the area.

Commissioner Bradford noted the railroad track that runs by Thomasville High School and asked if Waite had been over the plan of action if an accident occurred there. Waite responded that there was a potential problem with the railroad running beside two schools and an apartment complex, but he planned to review the hazardous mitigation plans.

He reported that all grant requirements were up-to-date at this time.

## **Love Road**

The Clarke County Commission endorsed an agreement to have Love Road, formerly called the Landfill Road, closed to through truck traffic.

The road is also known as the "cut-off" for motorists traveling between Highway 43 South and Highway 84 East.

The agreement states that the county will be responsible for the upkeep of the road and the Town of Grove Hill will police the road.

Transfer trucks are used by several businesses along the road, and those trucks will be permitted to use it, but trucks just using the route as a short cut will have to get off Highway 43 at the overpass to get on Highway 84, which is a safer route, traffic-wise, commissioners pointed out.

County Attorney Bruce Wilson said he had already discussed the matter with Grove Hill Mayor Lamar Hudson and the Town Council will likely also endorse the agreement at its next meeting.

### **Industrial park**

A public hearing was held before Tuesday's commission meeting for the purpose of establishing a county industrial park.

The acreage is south of Thomasville, where the Louisiana Pacific OSB mill is locating.

Commissioners agreed to a resolution establishing the land as a county industrial park, which means that no municipality can annex the property and it would be maintained as county property.

### **Engineer's report**

Commissioners voted to offer Daniel Overton, an Antioch native and resident, the job as assistant engineer. Overton is currently working as assistant engineer for Perry County and was the county engineer in Conecuh County. He also worked for Clarke County at one time.

Overton was the only applicant for the job. He told Noble he was interested in returning to Clarke County for a salary of \$75,000 a year. The state will pay \$41,061 and the county would be responsible for \$33,939 annually.

"I think it would be an advantage to us to have Danny working with us. I think we're fortunate to get somebody with his credentials. Danny has worked for us before and he's certainly capable. I'd like to make him an offer," Noble said.

"I think we are fortunate in this and I support offering this man a contract," Commissioner Patricia DuBose added.

Commissioners voted unanimously to offer Overton the position.

Noble reported he had hired Terry Gates as an equipment operator three, and would need to fill the operator two vacancy left by Gates. Commissioners agreed for Noble to post the position.

Payment of an invoice, in the amount of \$4,032, to Kellogg, Brown and Root for their services on the grade, drain, base and pave project at Gosport was approved.

Noble reported that the project there was nearly complete, except for some paint striping and a few punch list items.

The bridge culvert replacement project at Little Reedy Creek is expected to get underway this week. Noble said traffic would be re-routed until the project is complete.

### **Voting houses**

Noble reported to commissioners the cost of trailers and metal buildings, which are being considered for use as voting facilities.

A 24x36 office trailer would run \$36,500 and an 18x26 trailer costs about \$24,000.

A metal building, 25x30 with bathrooms, lighting, etc., would run \$27,000.

"This is a ballpark figure of what we're looking at. Right now, the cheapest way would be the metal buildings," Noble remarked.

Commissioner DuBose asked if the metal buildings could be ready by June 7. Noble said he thought it was possible, but they would have to seek bids soon if that's what they wanted.

County Attorney Bruce Wilson said he had been in touch with the Clarke County School System and had been advised there were two portable classrooms not in use, but he would have to wait until he talked to Superintendent Gerald Stephens to see if the trailers could be used by the county.

Noble suggested checking in Mobile and Baldwin counties also because of the new schools being built there.

Commissioner Bradford said a tentative agreement had been worked out for the use of the community center in the Opine-Tallahatta Springs community.

The Opine-Tallahatta Springs Volunteer Fire Department is in the process of purchasing the building. Because of the finances needed to make the purchase, they have asked for a ten year lease, at \$3,000, for the building to be used for voting.

"They didn't want to charge us anything, but they had to come up with the money to buy the community house," Bradford explained.

Wilson said he would draw up an agreement between the county commission and the fire department for use of the community house.

At the end of Tuesday's meeting Bradford told commissioners he would like to see the poll workers get a pay increase. "They work about 14 hours on those days and \$80 a day is not much compensation for the work they do," he said.

### **Other business**

Commissioner DuBose informed the other commissioners that she had talked with Lisa Glenn of Southern Linc, who told her a tower would be placed in Coffeeville and they are also communicating with Kudzu Wireless to see if a partnership can be formed for rural communications.

Rhone advised commissioners they needed to inform legislative delegates that they are against the Tennessee Valley Authority House Bill 231, which would cut out a good bit of funding for Clarke, Washington and Monroe Counties.

Bids were opened for the new CAD system for Clarke County E-911. Global Software Company's proposed bid was \$152,030. Southern Software Incorporates proposed bid was \$156,590. The county had only allocated \$50,000 in the budget for this purchase and commissioners took no action on the matter, tabling it until their next meeting.

A discussion on raising 911 tariff's was also tabled until the next meeting.

Commissioners decided to meet with county officials in Choctaw and Washington counties before endorsing a Regional Economic Development effort.

Members of the commission agreed to submit letters of support for the Phase 3 Federal Appropriation Request, for \$2 million, which would be used for economic development.

A contract with Goodwyn, Mills and Cawood engineering firm for developing a countywide master plan for economic growth was approved.

Rhone remarked that parking at the courthouse would be even more difficult when next week's civil jury and grand jury term begins. "We want to ask the citizens to be patient, and be courteous. If they are here for court and plan to be in the courthouse for some time, then we ask that they not park in the parking spaces in front of the courthouse, but leave them for those who will only be here a few minutes," he said.

St. Bernard's Parish was using a communications system so old that the online auction site eBay was the source for spare parts, according to the report. In nearby Jefferson Parish, the sheriff's office was using a digital phone system, but all the other county agencies were on analog systems, making communications between them impossible. A proposed \$45-million modernization had been deemed "cost-prohibitive" by local officials the previous year, and an alternative patchwork-quilt approach was 18 months from completion when Katrina struck.

State law enforcement officials were likewise frustrated. In each of the last two years, the report said, the Louisiana State Police had asked Congress for \$105 million to upgrade its communications network. When those efforts failed, the agency explored grant opportunities offered by the Department of Homeland Security, but its applications were turned down.

In the widespread collapse of communications systems after Katrina made landfall -- more than 3,000 phone lines were knocked out and callers to 911 frequently got a busy signal, if they were able to get through -- private companies were often more resourceful than government agencies in overcoming communications challenges, the Senate report said.

The Starwood Hotel Co., "through effective planning and pre-positioning of phones," helped about 2,100 people -- guests, employees and their families -- in two of its hotels by deploying satellite telephones and using batteries to maintain Internet connections.

"Local responders and journalists sometimes relied on Starwood's communications capabilities since the city's communications system was largely lost," said the report.

Mississippi Power relied on an internal system, Southern Linc Wireless, that had been designed with "considerable redundancy." Within three days of the landfall, it was functioning at nearly 100 percent. The utility also installed its own microwave capability to 12 remote staging areas.

Though FEMA's lapses during the Katrina disaster have been well documented, the U.S. Forest Service -- which maintains its radio supply mostly for fighting fires -- has rarely been mentioned, perhaps because its radios have limited range.

"We deployed 2,176 radios to the region, and 30 command repeaters to expand their range," U.S. Forest Service spokesman Dan Jiron said Tuesday. "They're not like cell phones. Because of their limited range and the need to use repeaters, they were probably not needed beyond that."

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## **Report Details Katrina Communications Fiasco**

**LA Times**

**By Johanna Neuman,**

**May 3, 2006**

**Backup equipment arrived late or went unused, a Senate panel finds. Private firms were often more adept at meeting the challenges.**

WASHINGTON — As state and local officials on the Gulf Coast scrambled to help panicked residents flee Hurricane Katrina on Aug. 29, mobile communications units developed by the Federal Emergency Management Agency were at Barksdale Air Force Base in Shreveport, La. — outside the disaster area — and did not make it to the state's emergency operations center in Baton Rouge until the day after the storm hit.

In addition, according to a bipartisan Senate committee report released Tuesday, most of the U.S. Forest Service's 5,000 radios — the largest civilian cache in the United States — remained unused.

In the eight months since Katrina devastated Louisiana and Mississippi, much has been written about how the failure of communications hampered relief and rescue efforts. Several reports, including one by a House select committee that Democratic leaders boycotted and another conducted by the White House, documented a collapse of telephones, computers and radio networks.

The 750-page "Hurricane Katrina: A Nation Still Unprepared," issued by the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee after 22 hearings over seven months, added some gripping details to the familiar narrative. The panel's main recommendations — which included a call for FEMA to be dismantled and restructured — were announced last week.

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But the Guard insisted on proof of such authorization, and the evacuation teams couldn't get through to state officials because cellphones weren't working. So patients were put in the back of pickups, and their wheelchairs and stretchers were loaded into boats pulled behind the trucks.

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He escaped a flooding building by climbing to the roof with his family. From there, he got word of the breached levees from Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries officials who rode by in boats. He was without communications for two days.

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